

# Hacker to appear in LA court over celebrity hacking

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Actress Scarlett Johansson arrives at the 83rd Annual Academy Awards held at the Kodak Theatre in Hollywood, California, February 2011. Christopher Chaney's arrest by FBI agents grew out of an 11-month investigation into the hacking of over 50 entertainment celebrities, including Scarlett Johansson.

A Florida computer hacker was ordered Friday to appear in a Los Angeles courtroom on November 1 after he entered no plea during a federal court appearance on Friday, court officials said.

Christopher Chaney, 35, learned he would face judicial proceedings on the other side of the United States during a brief court date in Jacksonville, where he lives.

His arrest by FBI agents grew out of an 11-month investigation into the hacking of over 50 entertainment celebrities, including Scarlett Johansson, Christina Aguilera and Mila Kunis.

If convicted, he could face up to 121 years in prison if convicted on 26 indictments that include accessing and damaging computers, wire tapping and identify theft.

Chaney had been released on bail earlier this week on condition that he stay off the Internet. Wearing blue jeans, a shirt and a tie, he left the courthouse in a limousine with dark tinted windows.

"Celebrity information is highly marketable," Steven Martinez, head of the Federal Bureau of Investigation's Los Angeles office, said earlier this week in reference to what was dubbed "Operation Hackerazzi."

"While the case against Mr Chaney involves celebrities who were targeted because of their fame, this case reminds us that we are all potential victims of [computer hackers](#)," added US Attorney Andre Birotte.

Aguilera's computer was hacked last December, when racy photos of her also hit the Internet. Kunis's cell phone was hacked in September with photos of her, including one in a bathtub, spread online.

Hacked pictures of Johansson, star of "The Horse Whisperer" and "Girl with a Pearl Earring," appeared in mid-September and showed her in a state of undress in a home setting.

The FBI alleges that Chaney used open-source, public information to try to guess a celebrity's email password, and then would breach the account.

He then allegedly communicated directly with contacts found in the

hacked email account's address list and searched the account for photos, information and other data.

To control the account, Chaney is alleged to have altered the email's account settings to go to a separate, unrelated e-mail address that he controlled.

After gaining complete access to the hacked account, Chaney then used the contact list to "harvest" new targets, according to the FBI.

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